

COMMUNICATION

5

**This module covers
the following information:**

Communication

How do we communicate?

How do communication skills develop?

1. Making eye contact
2. Taking turns
3. Making choices

Monitoring progress

Sharing emotions and feelings



COMMUNICATION



Materials

Flipchart, doll, toys, toffees/sweets (including toys that make a noise e.g. rattles or plastic water bottles with stones/dried beans), images 5.01-5.05.



Icebreaker

10 minutes

In pairs: One person puts three to four large sweets or toffees in her mouth and tells the other person what she would do if she won the lottery.

How does it feel for the person trying to express themselves? How does it feel for the person trying to understand?

The aim of this activity is to realise how hard it is to communicate with a mouth that does not work properly and how much patience is needed to persevere and listen. It can be frustrating for both people.



Explain

5 minutes

Outcomes for the module (on a flipchart).

By the end of this session, you will:

1. Understand what communication is and why it is important.
2. Be more confident to help your child understand better.
3. Learn what you and your family can do to help your child to communicate.



Activity

15 – 20 minutes

Ask the group What do you think communication is and what does it involve?

This discussion should include listening to others, understanding what they are saying, telling others what you think, want or feel.

Communication is:

- Understanding what others say to us.
- Expressing our thoughts, needs and feelings.
- A 2-way process.
- A basic human right.

Split into groups of three. Give one person in each group one of the following sentences (either by writing it down or whispering it):

1. My foot is painful.
2. I want to go outside.
3. I am tired.
4. I am bored.

The person goes back to their group and tries to 'explain' the sentence without using words. **They can use sounds, facial expressions and gestures (non-verbal communication).** Tell the group they need to work out what the volunteer is trying to say.

After two minutes the person moves on to another group and tries to explain to them.



Material

Use image 5.01 to explain the cycle of communication.



How did the person communicate what they meant? Was it easier or harder to explain as you went to different groups?

Cover the following:

- **Voice:** crying, whining.
- **Facial expression:** smiling, frowning, look of pain, big eyes.
- **Body movement:** nodding head, shrugging shoulders, turning themselves towards or away from someone or something.
- **Gestures:** waving goodbye.
- **Pointing:** using eyes or a finger.



Ask

"Why do we communicate? Why is communication important to young children?"

Discuss the following reasons:

- It is an important part of **bonding**.
- **Expressing our needs and wants**.
- Establishing **relationships and making friends**.
- Key in **learning new things**.
- When communicating with a child with **development difficulties**, the cycle of successful expression and understanding between the two of you often breaks down.

HOW DO WE COMMUNICATE?



Materials

Doll



Ask

*"What parts of your body do you use to **EXPRESS** yourself? What parts of your body do you use to **UNDERSTAND** a message?"*

Using a doll ask everyone to point out the different parts of the body which are used in communication, **EXPLAIN** the following:

To **EXPRESS** yourself you need:

- The intellect to think of what you want to express.
- Control of the mouth and voice, and breath, to speak (tongue and mouth).
- Control of your head and body parts to point, make gestures and make eye contact.

To **UNDERSTAND** a message, you need:

- Ears to hear and eyes to see the message.
- The part of your brain that makes sense of what you have heard or seen (intellect).

Facilitator Tips:

Remember the brain from week 1. If the brain is affected, it can also affect how your child communicates.



Ask

"Which of these communication examples might be difficult for your child?"

In the discussion, caregivers may see some, or all of these things as being difficult, depending on their child.

HOW COMMUNICATION SKILLS DEVELOP



Explain

- Communication skills develop in a sequence of steps.
- Listening and understanding comes before talking.
- Foundation skills include making eye contact (looking) and listening, taking turns and making choices. Playing is a great way for your child to learn these skills.

Talk to her

Even if your child cannot use speech to communicate, don't stop speaking to her. Other family members, friends and neighbours can talk to her too.

Facilitator Tips:

In the break think about which children you would like to demonstrate eye contact, turn taking and making choices and ask their caregiver if they will be happy to show the rest of the group.

Break

10 minutes



Activity

15 minutes

Ask one person to:

1. Show how to encourage your child to make eye contact (Image 5.02)



Ask

"What did you see the caregiver do? What did you see the child do? What does using our eyes help us to do?"

Ensure the concepts below are covered:

- Hold your face close to your child's face and talk to her. Try to encourage her to look at you.
- Call her name; when she looks at you, praise her by smiling and talking. Use lots of facial expression. Make sure you allow her time to look at you, it may take her a little while at first.
- Sing songs to her. She will enjoy the rhythm.
- Play Peek-a-Boo.
- Show her different objects. Shiny objects such as a DVD or tin foil will draw her attention. You can also use everyday objects with different textures or sounds. Let her play and explore objects. Talk to her about the different objects.
- Notice the things that your child looks at, if they look towards a person or an object, point to where they are looking and name it for them and show them that you can see what they are paying attention to.



Facilitator Tips:

Parents in previous groups have said that they did not know that it was possible for them to stimulate their children to make choices. This is a good time to explore this and how choice making can work for each family. Parents liked having their children in the same room so that they could practice.

2. Show how to encourage your child to take turns (Image 5.03)



Ask

"What did you see the caregiver do? What did you see the child do? What does waiting during play help us to do?"

- When she makes a noise, or uses facial expression, copy her and then try take turns talking. So, for example; child coos/babbles, you coo, you wait for child to coo again, you coo etc.
- Respond immediately to any attempt she uses to initiate communication (noises/eye contact.)
- Play music on the cell phone, then stop the music, or bounce your child on your knee and then stop and wait for a response from her (for example looking at the phone/looking at you/making a noise) before switching it on again/starting bouncing again.
- Waiting is very important, children with developmental delay are often slow to respond, so give your child plenty of time.
- Clap your hands and then ask her or help her to clap her hands.
- Roll/throw a ball between you, or build a tower of little blocks together say eg Mummy's turn...your turn etc.



3. Show how to encourage your child to make choices

(Image 5.04)



Ask

"What did you see the child do? What did you see the caregiver do? How may understanding your child's choice help you and your family? How will your child being understood help her?"

- Give her a choice of things to play with or to eat.
- Show her the things she can choose from – place them in front of her where she can see them best. **Start by offering a choice between two things only**, then with time increase it to three or four choices.
- For example, hold one object in front of the child and name it. Then take it away and show them the other item and name it. Then take that one away. Now show the child both of the items and ask her to choose. E.g. 'Do you want water or milk?' or 'Do you want the ball or the doll?'



- Wait for a response, which could be **pointing or looking towards one of the objects**. (Children point with their eyes (looking) before they learn to use their hands) Give her the object she is looking at or pointing to immediately and say 'you chose the ball by looking at it, so let's play with the ball'.

Facilitator Tips:

Encourage participants to call their child by her name so that she can recognize her own name, and not just a nickname. Using words and a tone of voice that people would use to talk to each other is helpful to stimulate children to learn more words.



Activity

20 minutes

Encourage everyone to practice **the three types of communication skills** you have just demonstrated. Allow them time to play and interact with their child.



Explain

It is not possible to predict the future and no one knows how well your child will communicate when they are older.

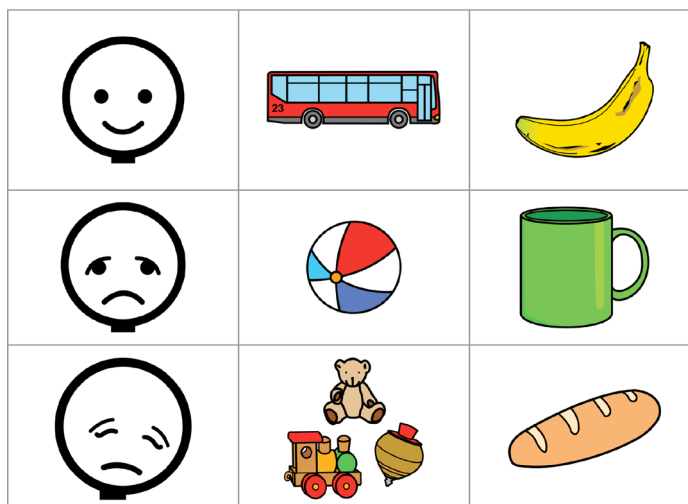
Children with developmental difficulties differ a lot in their abilities to understand and express themselves. Many children with developmental difficulties can speak, some less clearly than others. For some children, their speech is not clear enough to communicate and some have no speech at all. It is possible for many to learn how to communicate using other methods than speaking.



Ask

"Has anyone heard of any other things that can help children to communicate?"

A simple communication board may be useful. This is something to discuss with your speech therapist or occupational therapist. Some children may not be able to see but they will still be able to communicate. (Image 5.05)



MONITORING PROGRESS



Ask

"What two things have you learnt today that you will teach to members of your family in order to improve communication with your child?"

Be prepared to come back at the next session and tell us how it went.



Ask

Think back to module 2 where you looked at stepping stones to help your child learn:

"What have you learnt today that would help your child practice these? What are you going?"

Take Home Messages:

- We all communicate in many different ways.
- All children can communicate, we just have to understand how they are trying to do it.
- Children with developmental difficulties may need extra time and help to develop their communication skills.
- Opportunities to practice communication skills are everywhere, for example practice eye contact while changing your child, practice making sounds and turn taking when bathing.

SHARING EMOTIONS AND FEELINGS



"There are lots of things to talk about. We learn to express how we feel. We don't have other spaces to do this. It is an opportunity." Mother, Salvador



Ask

"How did you feel in this last module about communication? How was it for you to talk about today's subject? Does your child have communication difficulties? How do you feel about that? Did it raise any emotions or feelings that you did not expect? How have you felt this week?"

Allow time for discussion and for everyone to interact with each other.

Facilitator Tips:

Giving feedback to everyone is also very important in these moments.

"What you are saying is important."

"Glad that you can talk about that."

"Do you also feel like this? When do you feel like this?"

These are examples of recognising what caregivers feel.